Buses on Delhi-Lahore route

485. SHRI MURLI DEORA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to ply two new buses on Delhi-Lahore route;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor alongwith the reasons for discontinuation of service earlier; and

(c) the precautionary measures taken by Government that terrorists do not infiltrate in the country and Pak Nationals leave the country on the expiry of their visa?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) and (b) Prime Minister had, on April 18, 2003, extended once again the hand of friendship to Pakistan. In his telephone conversation with Pakistan's Prime Minister on April 28, 2003, Prime Minister had emphasized the importance of economic cooperation, cultural exchanges, people-to-people contacts and civil aviation links for creating a climate conducive to addressing more difficult issues. In this context, Government had on May 26, 2003, approved the resumption of Delhi-Lahore bus service as soon as the details were worked out by the technical authorities of the two countries. A technical team from Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation visited India and a technical level meeting was held between the two countries on June 19-20, 2003 in New Delhi. Subsequently, the bus resumed service from July 11, 2003.

After the terrorist attack on Indian Parliament on December 13, 2001 Government asked Pakistan to take appropriate action against the terrorist outfits involved in the attack. Following lack of concern by the Government of Pakistan, Government decided on December 21, 2001 to take certain measures against Pakistan including the suspension of Delhi-Lahore bus service with effect from January 1, 2002.

(c) Government have taken appropriate measures in this regard which includes grant of visa to Pakistani nationals after pre-verification. It has also been made clear to Pakistan that ending cross border infiltration and terrorism was necessary for creating an atmosphere conducive to sustained dialogue.